

Ruckus music system falls short of expectations



Alex Hayden

Nothing in life is free. Whatever we get always comes at a cost. Whether it is time, money, or being a living advertisement for a company, there is always a price. In fact, when we do come across something we believe to be free, we often want to believe it so badly that we completely overlook the costs. We are just plain suckers for anything with the label "free" on it. Yet, in the end, "free" more often equates itself with "benefits outweigh the costs" rather than actually being free. This is the way I feel every time I

see and hear about Ruckus at Truman. Ruckus, if you have not already heard about it, is a "free" music service that Truman bought for its students to use. With a Ruckus subscription (which can only be used with a valid school e-mail address from a school that has purchased a subscription), students can download as much music as they want from Ruckus's database. In this way, students may legally download music without restriction. Did I say without restriction? That's not entirely correct. There are just a few restrictions to what can be done with Ruckus. First, Ruckus' music only works with the Ruckus media player or Windows Media Player. Try to transfer an mp3 file to play on iTunes and the system does not let you, thanks to special encryption on the files. This also means that you cannot download the music to any Apple products, including iPods.

So if you're an Apple user, sorry. But don't fret: You can download the music files to specific music players. Which music players, you ask? Why, the ones with Microsoft PlaysForSure certification. Even this, however, has limitations. First, you must buy a subscription to Ruckus to Go to download to an mp3 player. Second, you must have an aforementioned compatible player, which just so happens to be manufactured by affiliates of Microsoft and Microsoft itself. Maybe that's why Microsoft's Zune has suddenly become popular. It's a great marketing ploy, but that doesn't mean I have to like it. This brings me to a few of the problems with Ruckus. To begin, Ruckus is advertising itself to a niche market (a.k.a. college students), and I applaud them for that. But restricting students to buying Microsoft mp3 players if they want to listen to the music is absurd. Instead, why not find an

agreement to allow iPods to download Ruckus' music files as well? The answer is simple, and it is the second reason Ruckus should have been passed up by Truman: Ruckus operates on the premise that all college and university students are thieves. We would rather illegally download music than pay for it. Even Chris Lawson, director of Corporate Development for Ruckus, admits some of the reasoning for creating Ruckus was to create an alternative to illegal downloading of music. That is why there is a special security encryption on Ruckus' music files — so that they cannot be converted to regular mp3s and stolen. I, for one, find the assertion that we are thieves insulting. The acts of a few should not be seen as characteristic of the whole, which is exactly what Ruckus assumes. In short, Truman should have passed on the offer from Ruckus. Just because it is the only legal music-shar-

ing service targeted at college students does not mean that it is the only option. Instead of paying the subscription to Ruckus, why not buy each student a premium subscription to legal music sharers like BearShare? It has free peer-to-peer, legal music downloads to begin with, and a premium subscription provides unlimited access to BearShare's music files. As it stands, however, I guess I'll have to settle for dealing with Ruckus and only listening to demo music on my computer. Still, there are better, legal options out there, and I hope we'll all take some time to explore them. All in all, though, I guess I can't complain. At least the music I'm getting is free ... ish.

Alex Hayden is a senior philosophy and religion and communication major from Jefferson City, Mo.

AROUND THE QUAD

What is the biggest item on your holiday wish list?



"I want a cover for my car seats."

Claudia Capuano
Freshman



"A brand-new shiny bike."

Michelle Coolidge
Junior



"I don't know anything about iPods, but I want one."

JoEllen Flanagan
Freshman



"A black digital camera with an LCD screen."

Erica Wiley
Sophomore

Native American reparations must involve more than money



Andrew Kindiger

Every year, the celebration of Thanksgiving for the average American features food, family and football. I recall the days in elementary school when my first-grade teacher wanted us to learn about the Pilgrims and the Native Americans on a more meaningful level. Naturally, we were given the choice to either make a Pilgrim hat out of black construction paper, or an "Indian headdress" with various artificial colored feathers. After we completed our fashion show of historical accessories, we reenacted the first Thanksgiving by sitting on the floor eating snack mix off paper plates. As I got older, I began to doubt the accuracy of the peaceful sentiments in my first-grade reenactment. I realized that the likely reaction of most Native Americans to new settlers (invaders?) was not so much "Glad you're here!" but rather "Why are you on our land?" The new settlers did not come bearing gifts, but rather the seeds of ideas such as Manifest Destiny and the roots of epidemics such as smallpox. In time, they brought forth the concepts of allotments and reservations. To make the first-grade reenactments reflect a more modern and perhaps more accurate perspective, I would suggest that seven-eighths of the class dress up in suits to represent the U.S. govern-

ment, while the remainder of the class is sent into the hall and can only come back when they have a convincing argument as to why they should be let back in the classroom. The plight of the Native American in light of the expansion of what we now call "American" culture usually is swept under the rug this time of year as we are offered an opportunity to forget about the wrongdoings of our ancestors over turkey and pie. Modern Native Americans have been ignored by mainstream American society and isolated in poverty and alcoholism where often the only financial independence can be derived through the operation of a casino. So let's fix it. All we need to do is turn around society as we know it, give the Native Americans back all the land we stole, which I guess would be all of it, then offer them billions (trillions, maybe?) of dollars in apology money. At this point, you've already realized that's not possible, and you are right. American society simply is not going to uproot and magically turn back time, and it really shouldn't even be expected of us. There are only so many ways in which our generation, and our parents' generation for that matter, can adequately compensate for the mistakes of our ancestors. I say adequate because the modern Native American must be recognized in relation to modern society. It is not the fault of Americans alive today that the land was colonized — the mistakes of our ancestors are in the past and our current faults are the ones that cry out for correction. These are the mistakes that we can compensate for.

Although we personally did not take land and resources from Native Americans, we still stand guilty of not adequately incorporating Native American life into our culture and not allowing Native Americans a place in society because of cultural differences. The way to correct our ancestors' mistakes in relation to Native Americans is similar to the way in which we need to correct our ancestors' role in slavery. In a recent Democratic debate, a question was asked about what the nation should do about reparations for African Americans. Sen. Barack Obama pointed out that money alone is not going to justify the cruelties of the past nor rectify the problems facing African Americans today. Obama thought it much more realistic and beneficial to invest in inner-city schools and address the separation of African Americans from society instead of looking to just give individuals money. The solution for providing reparations to Native Americans is the same. Especially now, when we are most likely to gloss over the past, we must remember that healing the wounds of the past must involve what we can do to make the lives of Native Americans — and by extension, all Americans — better. That is going to mean investing in a culture through providing equal opportunities, education and acceptance, and much more than just a simple apology or some dollars and cents.

Andrew Kindiger is a freshman English major from Liberty, Mo.

Fast food job teaches humility while providing needed income



Jackie Gonzalez

College is expensive. An obvious statement to say the least, but even tuition and books aside, general living expenses often get way out of hand. At least that's how it has been for me. I entered Truman with not a financial care in the world, yet two-and-a-half-years later, here I am with a whopping nine cents in my checking account. I knew my parents would be bothered by this, but I knew I had to do something to get some source of income. Granted, my parents provide pretty much all the money I actually need for my schooling experience, but being a young girl in the college world, I craved more. How else was I supposed to get Guitar Hero III? So I decided to get a job. I had very limited options when it came to deciding where to work: I didn't have a car,

and I didn't have much availability. Thus, I resorted to the one type of career I dreaded the most: fast food. And not just any fast food joint, but the biggest and baddest of them all: McDonald's. Although I felt pretty embarrassed about it, I really had no choice. As previously stated, I did far too much frivolous spending throughout my first two college years, and I could not have managed to keep the same lifestyle without a source of income. I had always told myself that I'd never get a job in fast food. Not only did I feel like I'd be helping to augment the number of heart attacks in the world, but I felt like I could do better. I felt totally superior to the idea, but upon reflection, I should have slapped myself in the face for ever feeling that way. Fast food jobs, just like all low-paying jobs, are neither trivial nor insignificant. They're incredibly decent and should be looked at as such. Working fast food allows you to witness human behavior in a way that many jobs don't. I've noticed a complete inability to be patient in most individuals. This world is so fast-paced that the slightest pause causes agitation. It's pretty silly to see people fuss over waiting that extra minute for some fresh-brewed coffee or some hot

fries, but nevertheless, I see people huff about it every time I'm at work. We the people need to relax. We the people need to be nice. Respect is where it's at. Everyone should work fast food at least once in his or her life. Not only can you observe an assortment of individuals, be they your coworkers or customers, but you learn to appreciate the little things in life. I'm sure anyone who has worked in customer service can tell you that even a smile or "thank you" goes a long way. It is sad that it has reached that point, but sometimes customers won't even give you eye contact when paying or speaking to you. Don't ever think you're "better" than fast food employment. Try working at a McDonald's sometime, and not only will you develop a much greater respect for those in the industry, but you'll come to realize that it actually is challenging. Sure, my ability to make a McFlurry won't help me in the long run, but learning to deal appreciate the general public is a much-needed skill that can benefit anyone.

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Lethality of Tasers should be considered before widespread use



Daniel Glossenger

An Eastern European man who doesn't speak English. An airport seemingly without a soul. And security personnel who bumble their way to notoriety. If Robert Dziekanski were Tom Hanks, the Vancouver airport could've been the setting for a feel-good film full of laughs and family-friendly fun. Unfortunately — especially for Dziekanski — his trip to Canada resulted not in a visit to a jazz bistro but in his untimely demise. The Polish-born Dziekanski was manhandled and Tasered to death on the floor of the international arrivals terminal by four members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on Oct. 14. After he became agitated (likely having to do with being confused and alone in an airport for 10 hours), airport security didn't bother to contact an interpreter — they called in the police. Within 30 seconds of their arrival, Dziekanski had been Tasered. But let's not be too harsh on our hockey-loving neighbors to the north, eh? Dziekanski was agitated and kicked a small chair before police arrived, after all. That certainly warrants the deployment of a life-threatening device, doesn't it? Taser International claims that the Taser has never killed anyone, ever, period. But that's akin to Smith & Wesson suggesting that a handgun never hurt a fly. Amnesty International recently briefed the Justice Department with its finding that nearly 300 people have died since 2001 shortly after having been Tasered. In at least 20 of those cases, autopsy reports cited the Taser as a "causal or contributory factor," according to the Amnesty International report. Vying for the most notorious of the Taser stories from Amnesty International is the man who died after being continuously shocked for 57 seconds. A close second is the man who died after being Tasered multiple times while in handcuffs in cycles longer than 10 seconds each. Of course, you might rank the case of Dziekanski ahead of them all just for the pure tragedy of it, or maybe you'd put Andrew "Don't tase me, bro!" Meyer at the top of your list of Taser tales. By the way, if university incidents involving Tasers are your cup of tea, I'd suggest the multiple Tasings of UCLA student Mostafa Tabatabaiejad, applied after he had been handcuffed and was being dragged out of the library. His crimes were especially heinous — fail-

ure to show his ID card and failure to leave the library when told to do so (he claimed he had been racially profiled by security workers who demanded his ID). By digging beyond anecdotal evidence, the core of the problem is revealed: Tasers — and stun guns in general — are an inappropriate method of subduing suspects, especially on the low end of the use-of-force continuum. Taser International admits on its Web site that the Taser is "not risk free," but "when used properly," the Taser is an effective intervention available to law enforcement. The difficult question is, of course, what constitutes proper use. Does shocking a person for five seconds constitute acceptable and proper use? How about 10? 30? What about a minute's worth? Can we do it twice? Three, four, maybe even 10 times? Unfortunately, Taser International's response to the multiple application question yields only that "there have been thousands of documented cases in which multiple applications from the TASER system were not only appropriate but were absolutely critical to a safe outcome of the situation." There's nothing on the Web site about how long someone should be Tasered (because nobody really knows what the proper length of time for a shock is), nor any reference to any published study that documents that multiple applications of the Taser were, in fact, "absolutely critical." Tasers should not be used unless the situation demands deadly force. They should never be used to subdue passive suspects or people who merely are shouting or appear agitated, nor should they be administered on suspects who are already handcuffed or restrained. Granted, law enforcement officers rarely have the time to assess the passivity of a suspect when lives are on the line (including their own). But then again, we certainly don't expect police officers to shoot handcuffed suspects, and we don't want them blowing away irritated air travelers left and right. Because of its unknown medical effects on suspects (and the track record of those who use it), a Taser should be regarded with the same gravity as any other gun in the law enforcement arsenal. Thousands of police departments have deployed Tasers to their patrol officers in the hope of preventing deadly shootings of suspects. That's an ideal that we should rightly aspire to — but the Taser is too dangerous to be used on the scale as it is now, and not enough is known about its effects to guarantee the safety of suspects who are, in fact, innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. It's high time we declared an end to the unilateral use of the Taser except for cases in which deadly force is warranted and stopped this shocking practice.

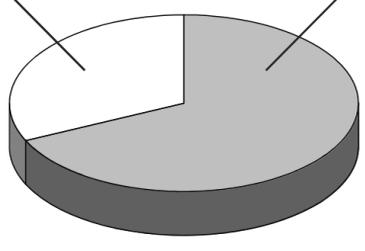
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WEB POLL

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No.
(32% — 15 votes)

Yes.
(68% — 32 votes)



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